ON THE GOTHAM STAGE

VIEWS AND REVIEWS

Correspondence of The Washington Herald.

New York, Nov. 10.—Kyrle Bellew has returned to the romantic periods of history for his new character this season, in which he will try to eclipse the success of "Raffles." He made his first New York appearance Monday evening at the Savoy in Conan Doyle's "Brigadier Gerard." This brigadier belongs wholly to the genre of brigadiers of the Napoleonic era, who are all heroes of a rough and eccentric exterior, just as are the heroes of Waterloo on the English side. This fellow is a colossal braggart, and on top of it a comical blunderer, and it is this combination of the typical Gascon which Sir Conan has happily blended into a picturesque swaggerer, and which Mr. Bellew portrays with equal felicity—that is, as far as an actor of his extremely refined methods can become master of the more rugged essentials of a character part. He may not be always conscientiously true to the role, but his clever technique is never at fault, and while Gerard in other hands might assume a different interest, Bellew invests him with those splendid theatrical attributes of reckless dash, swordsmanlike skill, and romantic balderdash that are always sure of an audience.

Napoleon being in need of a bold blade, and knowing Gerard to possess "the stoutest heart and the hardest head" in the army, sends him on a mission to steal certain papers of state from his enemy, Talleyrand. Gerard, between fighting and blundering, gets into the presence of the great Talleyrand, is captured and locked up to be bundled back to Napoleon as a mark of contempt and defiance. But Gerard blunders some more, gets into a coat belonging to a statesman in making his escape, when, lo and behold! the papers are found in one of the pockets, and his mission is crowned with success.

Bellew is unsurpassed in a role of sword and cloak, and even with the waning interest in improbable characters of the Don Caesar de Bazan and d'Artagnan type, succeeds in beguiling your fancy in the most pleasant manner. He is so conspicuously finished, suave of manner, and so dulcet of voice in making love to his heroines, that you are bound to applaud him, whatever the character he impersonates.

The production deserves notice, as does the acting of Ida Conquest as the heroine. The part of Talleyrand is carelessly drawn, but within these restrictions he was well interpreted by Henry Harmon. The actor who played Napoleon added but one more variation to the multifarious types of the great emperor which have been appearing on the American stage at regularly recurring intervals.

By all means see "The Chorus Lady" when it comes your way. It has just two points that will recommend it, one of which directly accounts for the popularity of the piece here. It is the scene in the second act, representing the dressing-room of the chorus girls of a musical comedy show, which reveals a wealth of naked shoulders and necks little dreamt of in the philosophy of the average purist who goes to the theater to be instructed. And as for hips, arms, and ankles——! Words fail in any attempt to do them justice. They must be seen to be appreciated. You have my guaranty that the sight is calculated not to offend the senses of the most fastidious. It is nature in its most alluring guise, and nothing more need be said.

The second point in its favor is the remarkably flattering creation of Miss O'Brien, the Chorus Lady, by Rose Stahl. Exaggerated? Yes, but with a Dickensian touch, whereas you have all the airs and notions and all the essential tokens of the chorus girl as she is popularly described by the yellow sheets, shown you to the life by an actress who has a genius for lucid characterization. Tears and laughter alternate like clouds of sunshine. The swing is the most artistically expressive ever heard on the stage, simply, I suppose, because James Ford, who wrote it, never uses it himself, and simply regards it as a feature in his bag of tricks. The pathos is effective, even though it is often grafted upon artificial situations, and Rose Stahl, though excellent, is somewhat hard and unreal in emotional scenes.

The plot turns on her guardianship of her sister, a sentimental little creature, who typifies the purely romantic side of a chorus girl's life; she indiscreetly accepts money from a young viveur (short for wealthy young bounder), is trapped in his room, and rescued from her embarrassing situation by her elder and experienced sister, the Chorus Lady. The elder Miss O'Brien drops her slang, strangely enough, as she develops psychological symptoms, shoulders the disgrace, is deserted by her sweetheart, and reaps a harvest of tears. In the end everything is satisfactorily explained, and happiness comes apace, behold!

With all her vanity and amid all the seductive scenes of artificial splendor of that artificial life, the chorus lady embodies the innate virtue of an ignorant girl of humble, even lowly, origin, her rugged honesty and womanly devotion to the feminine standard of propriety and decency, and as Miss Stahl portrays her, she is a lesson of uplifting grace. For several years this actress played a sketch of the same title in vaudeville, but those who saw her in vaudeville will be surprised at the clever development of its central idea into a four-act comedy.

Along with John Drew in "His House in Order," "The Lion and the Mouse," and Blanche Bates in "The Girl of the Golden West"—which, by the way, marks the longest engagement ever played by a female star in New York—Henry Arthur Jones' exposure of clerical and social hypocrisy in England in his play of that title at the Hudson maintains an even level of popularity. Some sensitive people don't approve of the boldness of this play, and one hears as many criticisms of its ethics as praises of its dramatic merits, but every performance is well attended, and the public has put the stamp of success upon it.

Jones, who has just been delivering two lectures at Harvard and Yale on the drift of the drama, believes that the stage can be made just as effective as the pulpit in denouncing hypocrisy, but in choosing the clergy as part of his scheme of satire, the rest being purely in lay surroundings, he shocks pietists, who resent his reflection on the cloth. A prospective young mother whose trust has been imposed upon also figures materially in the plot and adds to the shock. But the play is undeniably strong in everything that counts for producing interest. If Jones rides social hobbies, it must be said that he rides them in a way to challenge admiration, and while his digs at society lack the severe penetration and candor of Ibsen, and he is never unromantic and therefore untheatrical, he does not mince matters when it comes to telling you to your face that the conventions which surround you are all false and morally degrading.

Clay Clement has, temporarily at least, shelved "Houston," and on Monday evening appeared in a revival of "The Old Dominion" at the Garden Theater, which was well received. In this comedy of the South Clement plays a German nobleman in dialect, who falls in love with a daughter of the soil amid amusing circumstances. Clement is an excellent actor and "The Old Dominion" affords him a good medium for his peculiar grade of refined comedy.

Manager Conried of the Metropolitan Opera House has selected "Romeo and Juliet" by Gounod for his first attraction of the season.

Geraldine Farrar, who has been making a tremendous hit in Germany, will sing Juliet and Charles Rousselliere will make his American debut as Romeo. The cast will include Charles Simard, the new French barytone, who will sing Mercutio. Other roles will be sung by Mme. Jacoby and MM. Plancon, Jounet, and Dufriche. The work will be conducted by M. Bovy, the new conductor from Paris.

May Irwin succeeded Nat Goodwin at the Bijou Monday evening in "Mrs. Wilson, That's All." She scored, the feature being a half dozen coon songs which she interpolated with the usual electrical effect. The piece is highly farcical, from the pen of George V. Hobart, and is largely a monologue for the lissom May.

If present plans are carried out, New York is going to enjoy something of a dramatic novelty next week. Be it known that Lena Ashwell, who is now appearing in "The Shulamite" at the Lyric Theater here, is regarded as the leading English emotional actress. She is in one person what Mrs. Fiske and Margaret Anglin, separately, are over here, for she has appeared in all their prominent roles in London, including Blanche Bates' part in "The Darling of the Gods." Her most notable triumph was won in "Mrs. Dane's Defense," which is precisely the case with Margaret Anglin.

Between the two women a sort of friendly rivalry has for sometime existed. In order to give their admirers an opportunity to determine which they like best, they are going to appear jointly in "Mrs. Dane's Defense," the English woman playing Mrs. Dane at one matinee, while the American—though, come to think of it, they were both born in Canada—will play the next leading part, Miss Anglin playing Mrs. Dane and Miss Ashwell the next important role at a matinee to take place the next day. This daring competition between the two women ought to afford sensation-loving Gotham playgoers a bit of a novelty.

But we have to record an even more daring enterprise which Henry Miller is engineering. It is this: "Mr. Henry Miller and Mrs. Sarah Cowell Le Moyne announce," &c., that they will be seen jointly in a stage adaptation of Browning's "Pippa Passes." This is a direct appeal to the Browningites, who are satisfied with nothing in the dramatic line that hasn't a Browning tinge. Many of his worshippers regard Shakespeare a pigmy alongside of Mr. Browning. The poem has been arranged for the stage by Mr. Miller, and some divine music has been composed for it by William Furst. Of course, the performances will be special matinees. Much curiosity is expressed whether the Browning worship has enough followers to make the venture pay. Mrs. Le Moyne is the woman for it, and likewise Miller the man, and I hope they will not be laughed at for their efforts to educate public taste to disregard conventions of form in the drama. You never can tell!

Among the interesting incidents of the past week is the announcement that Henry Miller, who has been branching out as a producing manager since he converted the Princess Theater from a morgue into a successful playhouse, has signed Charlotte Walker for five years, and will add her to his list of stars, which includes Alla Nazimora, the noted Russian actress, who will soon appear as Hedda Gabler in English. Charlotte Walker has had her ups and downs, but no one has yet denied her the ability to act, and in the right sort of play she is likely to become a stellar fixture of luminous intensity. She will continue playing "On Parole," which has not yet been seen in New York.

Another interesting bit of news which is still guarded as a secret is the rumor that "Cleo," the play in which Mrs. Leslie Carter will be seen this season, under the management of Charles Dillingham, is a rewritten version of "Article 47," by Milton Royle. In this play, which is from the French, Clara Morris used to thrill her audiences more than a quarter of a century ago. The play was accounted among the most graphic examples of French realism. Usually she was unable to play it more than once a week, because the grewsomeness of it got on her nerves and often left her without strength to play "Camille" or "Miss Multon" the night after. The delay in Mrs. Carter's season is understood to be due to the lack of a strong leading man who is available.

Belasco this week completed his rehearsals of "The Rose of the Rancho," and he and his company left to-day for Boston, where the new production is scheduled to open Tuesday evening. The preparations are further advanced than usual with a Belasco play, and no postponement is anticipated. It is another of his gorgeous scenic undertakings, full of light, life, and color. Those who think it is "The Gadfly" revamped will have to guess again. It is not. Incidentally people interested in theatrical events will do well to keep their eyes on Frances Starr, who plays the leading female part in the play. She is very likely to be heard from.

FRED S. SCHRADER.

The Earth's Surface.

From Lippincott's.

Two sisters, one tipping the scales at 200 pounds or more, and the other slight to extreme slimness, but very beautiful, were being introduced at a reception.

"What's her name?" whispered one young man to a friend, referring to the slim sister. "I didn't catch it."

"Virginia," answered the friend.

"Virginia!" repeated the young man, in apparent surprise. "Then her sister must be the whole United States!"

DISSERTATION ON WHISKERS.

How Shall We Describe the Varieties of Hirsute Appendages?

From the Boston Herald.

Frank Richardson, of London, is shocked because Mrs. Craigie used in her last novel, "The Dream and the Business," the expression "side whiskers." He objects to the "redundant 'side.'" Whiskers "is" whiskers, he would have us believe; but there is one glory of the "Piccadilly weepers," and another of the "mutton chop." Mr. George Meredith, who has much to say about whiskers in his novels—did he not invent the sublime word "whiskerage?"—uses the term for various forms of facial foliage. He, Dickens, the Richardson of "Clarissa;" Bronte, and others added "side" as descriptive and particularizing.

"Whiskers" is now a vague term. It may describe "Galway sluggers." "The wind blew through his whiskers!" But it would scorn to blow through weak "siders." Here is reference to luxuriant growth from ears to below the chin. Then there is the Homeric term "zymos." Mr. Richardson condemns "lip whiskers" (for mustache) and "chin whiskers" (beardette) as Americanisms. Who ever heard in Boston the synonym "lip whisker?"

We fear "chin whisker" is an Americanism. Richard Grant White spoke of "that adornment known in the West as 'chin whiskers,'" but Mr. White was too often a superior person. The term is much to be preferred to "beardette," a vile word which is neither English nor French.

Two Deer and a Prima Donna.

From the Los Angeles Times.

Promise of a superlative sunrise lured Miss Ellen Beach Yaw into the open at daybreak one morning during a recent outing with friends in San Gabriel's Canyon. She stood silent for a while watching the pale tints on the hills ripen to vivid color. Suddenly a faint noise broke the stillness. Turning, she saw two beautiful panting deer drinking in a neighboring brook.

Almost at the same moment far down the canyon, the figures of two creeping hunters became visible. In another moment they caught sight of the drinking deer and their guns sprang to their shoulders. Miss Yaw couldn't bear to see the beautiful animals slaughtered. But she didn't care to offend the hunters. She took a deep breath, and before the hunters could aim and fire, the cliffs rang with the ravishing echoes of a brilliant, rippling operatic cadenza.

The startled deer bounded to cover. The amazed hunters lowered their rifles, and for the first time noticed the figure of the young woman, who seemed to be as surprised as themselves at discovering she was not alone. Had she seen the deer? What! Real, live deer? She was sorry to say she had not, and she would have given so much to see them. With looks of mingled resignation and disgust, the hunters saluted and turned on their tracks. How stupid women could be! Miss Yaw laughed a low, happy laugh, at the success of her ruse.

The Scalp Dance and "Salome."

From the New York Telegraph.

During a dinner Dr. Otto Neitzel jumped up and played one of the leading "Salome" motives.

"I've heard that before," cried John Philip Sousa, also rushing over to the piano, before which he sat down and played exactly the same motive. "That," says Sousa, "is the scalp dance of the Apache Indians." It was.

Sousa then reported to the amazed assemblage that a German firm had recently cabled to him offering him $50 for a new march. We heard "Planets and Stripes," ran the cablegram, "and liked same."

Sure to Tell.

From the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

A woman authority insists that women make better bankers than men. Well, they're surer tellers, anyway.

POET AND THE PRINTER.

A Compositor's Interpretation of the Tender Lines Committed to Him.

From the Portland Argus.

An editor was sitting in his office one day when a man entered whose brow was clothed with thunder. Fiercely seizing a chair, he slammed his hat on the table, hurled his umbrella on the floor and sat down.

"Are you the editor?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Can you read writing?"

"Of course."

"Read that, then," he said, thrusting at the editor an envelope with an inscription on it.

"B——" said the editor, trying to spell it. "That's not a 'B,' it's an 'S,'" said the poet.

"S? Oh, yes, I see. Well, it looks like 'Soles for dinner,' or 'Souls for Sinners,'" said the editor.

"No, sir," replied the man, "nothing of the sort. That's my name—Samuel Brunner. I knew you couldn't read. I called to see about that poem of mine you printed the other day entitled "The Surcease of Sorrow."

"I don't remember it," said the editor. "Of course you don't, because it went into the paper under the villainous title of "Smearcase To-morrow."

"A blunder of the compositor, I suppose."

"Yes, sir; and that is what I am here to see you about. The way in which that poem was mutilated was simply scandalous. I haven't slept a night since. It exposed me to derision. People think me a fool. (The editor coughed.) Let me show you. This first line, when I wrote it, read this way: 'Lying by a weeping willow, underneath a gentle slope.' This is beautiful and poetic. Now, how did your vile sheet represent it to the public? 'Lying to a weeping widow, I induced her to elope.' 'Weeping widow,' mind you. A widow! Oh, thunder and lightning! This is too much!"

"It's hard, sir, very hard," said the editor.

"Then take the fifth verse. In the original manuscript it said, plain as daylight: 'Take away the jingling money; it is only glittering dross.' In its printed form you make me say: 'Take away the tingling honey; put some flies in for the boss.' By George! I feel like attacking somebody with your fire shovel! But oh, look at the sixth verse. I wrote: 'I'm weary of the tossing of the ocean as it heaves.' When I opened your paper and saw the lines transformed into 'I'm wearing out my trousers till they are open at the knees,' I thought that was taking an inch too far. I fancy I have a right to murder that compositor. Where is he?"

"He is out just now," said the editor. "Come in to-morrow."

"I will," said the poet, "and I will come armed."

WEEVIL'S ONWARD MARCH.

Southern Cotton Pest Halts for the Winter West of Mississippi.

From the Birmingham Age-Herald.

The ravages of the boll weevil this year have been brought to an end by frosts and cold weather. The insect cannot stand low temperatures, and as soon as they come to us the insect loses his appetite and either dies or hibernates. The Louisiana crop pest commission reports that the outward post of the weevil this year is Harrisonburg, in Catahoula Parish. Harrisonburg is about twenty miles from the Mississippi River. It is abreast of Natchez, with which it has rail connection. Rosa, in St. Laudry Parish, is another casterly outpost of the pest. Rosa is abreast of Baton Rouge, and about forty miles from it. Harrisonburg may be considered the utmost advance of the pest this season.

The Mississippi crop pest commission reports none of the insects near Natchez, which has become the point of danger, and we may therefore safely assume that there are no weevils east of the river. They have, in fact, a belt to cross on the west side of it varying in width from twenty to fifty miles, and a cold winter might reduce their numbers to such an extent that they will not be able to cross the river next year. The hope is freely expressed in Mississippi that one more year of freedom from the pest will be secured.

First Lecture on Holland.

Dwight Elmendorf, during his travels the past summer, became enthusiastic over the beauties of Holland, and it is to this picturesque country that he will devote his first lecture at the National Theater to-morrow afternoon. To those who do not know Holland, it is merely a country of windmills, dykes, and sabots. This Holland, Mr. Elmendorf will show, but another Holland also, with beautiful scenery and quaint people.

Owing to the kindness of his many Dutch friends, he has obtained many interesting pictures of the home life in out-of-the-way villages. He has some fine pictures in motion of the Kirmess at Souburg, ring riding, the market at Middleburg, and portraits of the Queen. He will show many splendid reproductions of Dutch art.